

The Circuit Writer

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NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
Northern New Jersey Conference, The United Methodist Church

CHURCH HISTORY CONTEST - Awards to be presented during 1974 Conference

Has your church published a new history of your local church during the calendar year 1973? If so, we urge you to enter it now in the 1973 Church History Recognition Contest sponsored by the Conference Commission on Archives and History. Large or small, pamphlet or bound volume, mimeographed or printed, all historical sketches produced during 1973 are eligible. Each history received will become part of the Conference collection.

MAIL ONE COPY TO Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, Drew University Library, Madison, N. J. 07940 by February 1, 1974. Awards will be announced during the 1974 session of the Annual Conference in what we hope will be the first in a continuing annual contest encouraging and recognizing the writing and publication of quality histories of churches within our Conference.

ABOUT NORTHERN NEW JERSEY METHODISM - IRVINGTON CHURCH, BISHOP VINCENT AND ADULT EDUCATION

The Northern New Jersey Conference has many achievements of which it can be proud. One of the achievements of which it can be most proud is the fact that the adult education movement of America began in one of its churches--the Methodist Episcopal Church in Irvington in 1856.

The young pastor of the church, John Vincent, later one of Methodism's most famous Bishops, began the movement which twenty years later flowered in the tremendous organization known as Chautauqua.

There were lectures, lyceums, and other attempts at adult education before, but it was at Chautauqua, under the inspiration of John Heyl Vincent, that the plan of bringing classical education within the reach of the man in the street was fully developed.

That goal, a classical education for average men and women denied the privilege of attending college or university, was born in John Vincent's "Falestine Classes" held on Saturday afternoons in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Irvington. Although the movement blossomed on the shores of Lake Chautauqua in New York, its roots were in New Jersey.

---F. J. Yetter

30 ATTEND WORKSHOP FOR LOCAL CHURCH HISTORIANS AT DREW

About 30 persons representing 20 of our churches attended a day-long workshop for local church historians at Drew University on Saturday, October 6. Dr. John H. Ness, Jr., Executive Secretary of the general church Commission on Archives and History, ably led us through an agenda aimed at sharpening skills of persons charged with preserving the record of our life together in local churches. If you missed this workshop, others are being planned.

CONFERENCE COMMISSION GETS HISTORIC LETTER - DEDICATION AT MENDHAM 1893

Through the thoughtfulness and generosity of Mrs. Frederica Cranston of Walton, New York, the Northern New Jersey Conference has received for its archives a letter written by Joseph Eurns to his wife on December 17, 1893, the day that the Mendham Methodist Episcopal Church was dedicated. The letter gives a vivid first-hand account of the services held that day. Bishop William X. Ninde preached an inspiring sermon and dedicated the new church structure. A list of ministers present is given in the letter. Neighboring churches omitted their services to join in the exercises of the day. The cost of the new house of worship was \$9,600. Both stone and the hauling of it to the place of construction were donated. The gift of this letter by Mrs. Cranston is greatly appreciated. It is the hope of the Conference Commission that interest will be stirred in a search for similar letters and documents concerning the founding or building of other churches in the Conference. Every church should celebrate Historical Sunday once a year and encourage the search for letters, deeds, booklets, and other historical documents that help to recover the records of the past and picture to present members the wonderful work of those who "labored that we might enter into and enjoy their labors." Any person who has or knows about such historical material is invited to get in touch with either Dr. Henry L. Lambdin or Professor Kenneth E. Rowe, both of whom may be addressed at Drew University, Madison, N. J. 07940

---Dr. H. L. Lambdin

HOW TO WRITE AND PUBLISH THE HISTORY OF A UNITED METHODIST CHURCH?

A very helpful 15-page pamphlet by this title, written by Dr. Wallace G. Smeltzer, has been published by the Commission on Archives and History of the UMC. For a FREE COPY contact the Editor.

TRAVELING EXHIBIT ON FRANCIS ASBURY

A small exhibit of Asbury memorabilia from the collection at Drew University is available on request for use at special celebrations in local churches. The exhibit includes several mounted prints and photographs, a set of ordination certificates signed by our first Bishop, along with a pair of spectacles he wore. When used with historical items from a local congregation, this makes an attractive addition to an anniversary or other historical observance. Contact Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, Drew University Library, Madison, N. J. 07940, 377-3800, Ext. 243.

NORTHEASTERN JURISDICTIONAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES & HISTORY MEETS AT DREW October 2

The Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Jurisdictional CAH included a banquet at Drew and a tour of the library's rich resources for United Methodist studies. Professor Lambdin of our Conference Commission delivered a paper on Henry Boehm, one of the great fathers of American Methodism and of New Jersey Methodism.

CELEBRATING THE HERITAGE

- ANDOVER:** The Andover Church held a special "Service of Memory" in their historic sanctuary on June 24, commemorating the last service of worship to be held in the 80-year-old building. Methodism began in an Andover farmhouse in 1825, later shared a church building with the Baptists and in 1882 built their first church. Ground-breaking for a new church building on a new 10 acre site took place in September.
- ASBURY:** Some remains of our first Bishop, Francis Asbury, returned to the scene of one of his favorite preaching spots--the Methodist Church in Asbury--when Dr. Rowe of Drew University brought the Asbury Traveling Exhibit with him on November 4 when he was guest preacher. The Rev. Dennis Buckley is pastor of the church whose first building was dedicated by Bishop Asbury in 1796. New church buildings were built in 1842 and 1913.
- CENTENARY COLLEGE** Centenary College for Women, Hackettstown, opened its 100th year on September 9th, with the arrival of 286 freshmen.
- COLESVILLE:** "A Century of Christian Service" was celebrated by the Colesville Church on October 7. At a special morning service of Holy Communion a chalice dating from 1837 was used and Dr. McElroy, Western District Superintendent preached the centennial sermon. A Centennial booklet has been published. The Rev. C. Frank Tonkinson is pastor,
- KINGWOOD:** Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, of Drew University, was guest preacher for the 50th Annual Home Coming Sunday celebration October 21. Methodist preachers have been visiting the Kingwood area since the 1770's. The pastor, the Reverend James Lubach, led the congregation on a pilgrimage to "Pulpit Rock" on the farm of Thomas West, where Bishop Asbury is said to have preached in 1788. The present sanctuary, the second for the parish, was built in 1860.
- MORRISTOWN:** Demolition of the Morristown Church was begun on July 16 -- 18 months after the historic structure was gutted by fire. Construction of the new church, utilizing the old stone facade, will cost 1.6 million dollars and will take about one year. The ruined "Methodist Church on the green", built in 1865, was one of the oldest public places of worship in town.
- MT. FERN:** The Mt. Fern Church celebrated its 90th anniversary on November 11, 1973 with a tape and double screen slide presentation entitled "A Conversation with Mrs. Andrews." In the taped interview Mrs. James Andrews recalls the early history of the church. She is considered to be eminently qualified for this task as she, too, is celebrating her 90th birthday and has been an active, life-long member of the congregation. The Rev. Eugene Hamilton, pastor, led a morning service reminiscent of the 1880's.

CELEBRATING THE HERITAGE (continued)

- SOUTH ORANGE - VAILSBURG** Both longevity and loyalty were stressed in the 125th anniversary celebration of South Orange-Vailsburg Church October 21, when the congregation saluted 27 persons who had been members for 50 years or more. Most of them were present. Bishop Taylor and District Superintendent Fayne participated in the celebration. "In the winter of 1847-48 the first small group of Methodists in South Orange began gathering in each other's homes for prayer and testimony meetings." In 1850, "Twenty rough planks" had been arranged for worship in summer at the site of the present South Orange Village Hall, while in the winter services were held in the home of Jeremiah Meeker. When use of the local school house was denied the Methodists in 1853, three dedicated women members of the church purchased 100 yards of canvas for \$12.50 on which to "ply their needles" to construct a tent at Prospect Street and the southwest corner of Third Street. Such a tent "did not suffice in wet and wintry weather to house the struggling band of Methodists, for in that same year a small chapel was erected." A larger church was built in 1874, and the present church replaced it in 1902. The Rev. John Dow is current pastor.
- WALPACK:** The Walpack Center church celebrated their 140th Anniversary on October 14. Following a special morning worship service at which Dr. John A. McElroy, Western District Superintendent, preached on the theme, "A Prayer for A Congregation", members and friends gathered for a covered dish luncheon. Mrs. Bertha Fuller was honored for her 60 years of membership. The Rev. Hazel L. Thomas is pastor.
- OTHERS:** We hope to make this a regular column in the newsletter. If your church is planning an anniversary celebration, or preparing a history, please contact the editor.

NEW METHODIST HISTORIC SITE IN NEW JERSEY - MILLBROOK CHURCH, DELAWARE WATER GAP

When officials of the National Park Service came to Dr. Kenneth Rowe, Methodist Librarian at Drew, to find out what the interior of a small town Methodist Church looked like a century ago, they got more than the necessary information. They got all of the century-old items necessary to conduct a service in the church--as a gift from the University.

The church is in Millbrook Village, the partly restored, partly reconstructed post-Civil War era town that is a feature of the new Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Though not entirely completed, the structure was re-dedicated early in October as part of the annual Millbrook Days festivities.

Taken from the book DOCTRINES AND DISCIPLINE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH (1868), which was included in the gift from Drew, the service of re-dedication was conducted jointly by representatives of the United Methodist, Jewish, and Roman Catholic faiths. Dr. Rowe attended as the University's representative. Also included in the Drew donation were a pulpit Bible (Philadelphia, 1853), a silver-plate communion service and baptismal bowl dated (New York, 1854), a Methodist Episcopal Hymnal of 1854 and two historic prints.